

Wonderful! 122: Spatial Basketball Relations

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[theme music plays]

Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hello, this is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel: And this is Wonderful!

Griffin: We're coming at you hot. We're coming at you live on this one. It's a new sort of technology that your podcast app offers.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: This is actually, technically, I guess, is a phone call? Right? If it's a live podcast that only you're hearing... Davis? Hi, Davis.

Rachel: [laughs] As soon as you press play, we race to our microphones.

Griffin: We raced to our microphones, dropped what we were doing..

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Which, for me, was a big bowl of spaghetti I was super excited to eat. I threw that on the fricking ground.

Rachel: Which you didn't have to do.

Griffin: I know. But I didn't want to be late for you, Davis. Our new focused listener—there's probably not. I tried to pick a name that probably nobody is named that listens to our show.

Rachel: There's definitely some folks with the last name of Davis.

Griffin: But not—I'm not talking to you.

Rachel: Oh.

Griffin: I'm talking to Davis.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: And you know who you are, Davis. You're special to me, and um... I'll never forget the time that we shared together in Miami that one hot summer night, back in 1978. We made love under the moon.

Rachel: 1978, Griffin? Come on.

Griffin: 1999.

Rachel: There you go.

Griffin: We made love under the moon.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: As we danced to samba music.

Rachel: Your... improv skills are...

Griffin: Are so good, you would think I—

Rachel: Unmatched.

Griffin: —had been doing this for, uh, a decade. Do you have any small wonders?

Rachel: Um, I've been getting these like, little mini... these little mini ice cream cones.

Griffin: [laughs] Yeah.

Rachel: Um, they're like little... little Drumstick cones, y'know?

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: But they're so tiny.

Griffin: They're so little.

Rachel: [laughs] They're like the size of your palm. And as such, they are relatively low-calorie, because you can eat them in one bite.

Griffin: They're like hundo-cal boys, yeah.

Rachel: But they—they really satisfy my dessert craving, and they're just such a sweet, delicious, frozen treat.

Griffin: I love these. Not even for their, uh... the fact that they are not, y'know, gonna blow up my sugar levels, just from being like—but the size of it?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Is exactly how much ice cream I want. I never—we get like, a pint of ice cream from Lick or Amy's or whatever...

Rachel: And you never finish it.

Griffin: Never finish it. Because I don't—I only want a few bites of ice cream at a time, and that's perfect! It's perfect, what this is. God, it's tough for me to think of a small wonder. A lot of my mental... I'm gonna let you in.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: A lot of my mental brain space has been occupied by the Animal Crossing: New Horizons Nintendo Direct that we watched together when we were on tour in Cincinnati, and just like, sort of my brain won't stop sort of boiling... is really the right word.

Rachel: Can you tell me which feature you're most excited about?

Griffin: Well, I'm trying to think about like, what I want to name the town. 'Cause that's the kind of thing that like, I know if I don't figure that out ahead of time, I'm gonna like, sit down with the game, so excited, years of waiting, and then I'll sit there in front of the screen, and then nine hours will have passed, and I hadn't named the town.

Um, and so like, I've just sort of been kickin' that around... uh, and I don't even want to float shit on the show. 'Cause it's like, that early in development. But it's just like, constantly been percolating.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: But I guess I want to say, that Nintendo Direct was, um... hot shit. And uh, I'm very excited for this, uh, for this game to come out. I'm uh, over the moon.

Rachel: Griffin's reaction was similar to when he watches a wrestling match. It was just like—just, standing up, cheering, y'know, running around in a circle.

Griffin: I'm glad you at least know... I mean, you know this. You've been playing this game for quite a while now, and you are quite into it. Or y'know, the last one.

Rachel: One month.

Griffin: Well, I mean, that's the longest I've ever seen you play any video game, so that's significant.

Rachel: [laughs] Okay.

Griffin: So at least you had that background, when you saw me, like... when they, y'know, broke down a piece of river or something like that, and you saw me like... I was slapping your arm like, "Yes yes yes!!" You at least had like, some vague idea of why that might be a good, exciting thing.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah, I'm not gonna defend myself any further. Hey, I go first this week.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: My first thing is... AOL Instant Messenger!

Rachel: Wow!

Griffin: This is not a thing I still use, obviously. Because it doesn't exist anymore. But I would be... it was so formative for me. And I would imagine, a lot of my contemporaries that I would be remiss on not like, recognizing its excellence. AOL Instant Messenger was first released in 1997, and it had a great run until a series of mergers brought Verizon to be in charge of the AOL brand, and uh, the uh, the chat service was unfortunately shuttered December 15th, 2017. Beautiful two decade run, though. It had a good life. A strong life.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Really, a one decade run, because I don't know that so many people were using it past the year, like, 2010, or like, whenever social media kind of became a thing. But man, if you—so, if you are a younger person, and you were not like, an internet user back then, uh... I think it's kind of tough to stress how like, kind of drastically different things were, with regards to, uh, online, like, popular communication, and like, kind of online identity.

And for me, like, AOL Instant Messenger was – and I think this is true for a lot of people – like, my first big footstep into having a sort of like, online identity. Or like, an online, uh, like... a façade for online communication. And that's why it was sort of so revolutionary, is because you could get it for free, and everyone fuckin' had it, because a lot of people had AOL from the free disks.

And so, it just had this instant install base that meant like, just everybody had it. Everybody at my middle school had it, and I remember in like, computer class, just like, everybody would have it open a little bit, or like, in the libra—

Rachel: Wow, during class!

Griffin: Well, you would learn ways to like, keep it minimized and turn off like the alert sound, so that it would flash in your task bar, and you'd wait for the teacher to go away, and you can, boop, hop in there. Chat a little bit. Boop, hide it. It was a—all of us were just like, straight up swordfishin' there, just keeping our shit fully cloaked.

But like, everybody at school had it, and I was never an especially, like, social kid, uh, outside of like, the circles I moved in. Like, my church, and like, the community theater group that I did plays with for, y'know, a decade or more. Um, and so, I wasn't like somebody who would talk to people on the phone. And I wasn't somebody who was like, great at talking to people who I wasn't friends with at school.

But... I felt emboldened...

Rachel: Yeah, of course!

Griffin: ... by having AOL Instant Messenger, that I felt like, this is a way... because texting wasn't a thing back then. Like, this was really my first foray into online sort of text-based communication. And it really changed everything.

Rachel: Yeah. I was much braver in the chat space than I would ever be in person.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Like, I had so many conversations, like, pivotal conversations, and like, friendships and relationships over Instant Messenger. [laughs]

Griffin: It really was, in like, preparing this segment, that I really gave it a like, fair credit for genuinely how, like, important it was in my life. Like, I did not really know... again, outside of the people who I had known my whole life, like, how to make new friends, or meet new people, or um, find some sort of like, common ground with somebody who I'm like, just kind of acquainted with.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And like, it really allowed you to do all that. So like, as a form of communication, it was really important. But what I like, really love, what I'm like, really nostalgic about is this, uh... and I should mention, like, if you are a, uh, y'know... if you are a extremely online person, even before those days, uh, doing y'know, shit like, uh...

Rachel: Bulletin boards or whatever.

Griffin: Bulletin boards. Like, uh... like, you know this was also a thing before AOL Instant Messenger, but AIM for me was like, the big one that just sort of everybody was on, and you didn't really have to like, worry about it.

Um, what I love about it, and what I get nostalgic about is the very meager amount of customization or personalization or ownership you had over AOL Instant Messenger, and how much you had to juice that to build this identity for yourself.

Rachel: Yeah. No, that's true.

Griffin: There are things that I think about, like your, uh, username. I can remember a lot of the usernames I had, and they're almost all universally so embarrassing that I'm not even gonna start listing them here.

Um... that... that was important, and then you'd get to the point where you'd realize, like, "Oh my god, the username I had when I was 13 is so embarrassing. I'm 14 now. I need a new username. But is it worth having to reach out to all my contacts to let them know I have a new username?"

Things like the color and font of your text was so hugely important.

Rachel: No, that's true. And I mean, of course, your away message.

Griffin: Your away message, and your like, profile that you could have that would have like, uh... and this was just basically like, an away message that people could look at any time. Which, again, you could customize the font of. But it wasn't MySpace, right? You couldn't put interactive elements onto that. It was literally just a message you could put up that you could change the font, the color of the font, and the background of the font. That was—that was it.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And again... this may seem like, kind of alien if you never used it, and like, Twitter or Facebook was your first sort of foray, where those options aren't even necessarily made available to you. Uh, it really was important, where like, I remember all of the popular girls at my school had a sort of sans leaning font, with like, lilac, or like, pink colors.

Rachel: [laughs] Wow.

Griffin: But like, then, if you wanted to be kind of edgy, you would have the black background with the red text.

Rachel: Oh, that was like, unreadable.

Griffin: It was unreadable. There were a lot of unreadable sort of text options. I think I did like, brown over yellow for a while.

Rachel: Ooh!

Griffin: Because I really wanted to stand out in a different way. I love that that was such an important thing. Like, your meager scraps of online sort of, uh, ownership that you could have, which basically boiled down to like, on your profile, like... well, here's my, y'know, for a lot of the circles I rolled in, like, here's my favorite bible verse. Here's my favorite lyric from Everclear. Like...

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And that was enough. Like, that was something that I agonized over, trying to get exactly right, because I wanted to have this perfect, idyllic picture of myself that I could use as like, my armor, as I entered, like, conversations that I would be uncomfortable to have in person.

Rachel: Yeah. Y'know, for me... so I was—started college in the year 2000. And freshman year, it was so instrumental in like, me building relationships with people I had just met at college. Y'know? It was like... you would like, somehow exchange screen names, which I don't really remember how that happened. But then like, you would be able to like, see their away message, and a lot of times, they would like, tell you where they were at. Y'know?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And then, you'd be able to figure out, like, y'know, are they all hanging out together? You would check and see who was idle, and then figure out, like, oh, okay, so they must be... alright, so if they're here... and then you'd like, anxiously wait for them to become active again.

Griffin: Yeah. It was so—

Rachel: It was a big deal.

Griffin: It was important, too. Like, I uh... I cannot, uh, count the number of times that like, the friends I was making... especially like, into high school, too. Like, I would be playing—I have this memory of being kind of... uhh... in sort of a dark place, kind of in like a, uh, feeling lousy for an extended period of time. Depression, I think they call it. Uh, in high school.

And like, I was playing EverQuest, like, a lot. And there was one night where it was our homecoming game, and I had been like, sort of growing my circle of friends in high school, which was sort of an agonizing process, 'cause I didn't have a great high school experience. Where I was just playing EverQuest, and had been playing it like, all day, and one of my friends, like, hit me up on IM, like, "Hey, we're all going to the game together. You should come, it'll be fun." And I was like, "Oh, I can't, I just got this new expansion, and y'know, I'm heading to the Dungeons of Norrath."

Rachel: [laughs] Aww.

Griffin: And he was like, "What the fuck are you talking about? Like, let's go all have fun together." And I did, and I'm glad I did. Like, it was, uh... as somebody who was like, online all the time, like, it was a really valuable sort of...

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Y'know, almost lifeline for me that, uh, I haven't thought about. Like, I haven't thought about it in... well over a decade, and it was only sort of like, when I stopped thinking about it as a joke, uh, I sort of realized, like, "Hey, actually, that was really important to me."

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: So, yeah. I'm getting like, emotional, talking about AOL Instant Messenger, which I was not expecting.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: But yes, thank you, AOL. Your Instant Messenger specifically. You were a great messaging service... a not great employer. [laughs] If I'm, uh, if I'm being honest.

Rachel: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Griffin: Yes. Hey, what's your first thing?

Rachel: My first thing is the Harlem Globetrotters.

Griffin: Oh my god, yes!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Holy shit! Have you ever seen them?

Rachel: Not in person. Have you?

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: Oh wow! I don't think I knew that!

Griffin: They came to like, the uh, Sandy Superstore Arena. The big Sandy Superstore Arena, uh, a couple times.

Rachel: You get some of those radio station tickets?

Griffin: Uh, probably. Yeah. Uh, yeah. I was really young when I went.

Rachel: Oh, okay.

Griffin: So I do not—I don't remember it, like, super, super well. I think I remember the like, fake bucket of water gag. I feel like they did that at everything, where they would like, have glitter in a bucket of water, and pretend like it was full of water, and throw it in somebody's face. Uh, obviously, they did many amazing shots and dunks as well.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. [laughs] Um, I have never seen them, uh, in person. But I remember them being on television a lot. Also, uh, there was a pair of players that were on several seasons of The Amazing Race, that I very much enjoyed.

Griffin: [gasps] Oh, yes! Oh, they were so good!

Rachel: So good. Um... Big Easy was one of them. I don't remember who the other one was, though.

Griffin: No. I just remember them going down the water slide in that one big water park, where the one couple was too afraid to go down the water slide, so they just cut them, like, "Bye, thanks!"

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah, they were great.

Rachel: Um, the Harlem Globetrotters have been around over 90 years. They were founded in 1926, back before people of color were allowed to play professional basketball. It was originally a team called the Savoy Big Five in Chicago, and they were named after the Chicago Ballroom where they played. And then, Abe Saperstein founded them as the Harlem Globetrotters in 1926.

And this was a real grassroots effort. He not only sewed their red, white, and blue uniforms himself, but he was also an owner, coach, manager, publicist, and sometimes, substitute player. [laughs]

Griffin: Fuck yeah! How has there not been like... maybe there has been, and I haven't seen it. Like, a movie about...

Rachel: I don't know! I watched, like, a short YouTube video that was very dramatic, and the voice over work on that was very intense.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But I've never seen like, a full length film on it. Um, they... so they played kind of as a serious team for several years, and it wasn't until the late 1930s when they started to do their like, ball handling tricks and routines. Saperstein worked really hard to get them to tour all over the country, and they were an incredible team.

1948 and 1949, they twice defeated the world champion, Minneapolis Lakers of the NBA. So they were kind of an unstoppable force, and that's when they really started to become kind of showmen. And this was actually... the articles I read suggested that it may have accelerated the integration of the NBA. The first African-American player drafted to sign an NBA contract was Nathaniel Clifton, who played for the Globetrotters.

Griffin: Oh, wow!

Rachel: Yeah, and they think it was that—those winning games against the world champion Minneapolis Lakers that may have motivated teams to say, "We've gotta draft some of these guys. They're incredible."

Wilt Chamberlain also played for the Globetrotters, 1958 to 1959.

Griffin: I think I knew that. My base—my—of all the sports, I would say my basketball knowledge is probably the most, uh, limited.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: I think I maybe know more about the Globetrotters than I do about, um, a lot of current, modern day, like, NBA teams. [laughs]

Rachel: [laughs] I know. That's the thing, I was a little nervous to talk about this, 'cause I am not a basketball expert by any means.

Griffin: I enjoy watching basketball games.

Rachel: Yeah, yeah.

Griffin: But I just like—I do not know, like... I don't... I just do not follow—I don't follow, really, most sports.

Rachel: Well, and the thing about the Globetrotters is, they're like—they're all about the stunts, right?

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: Which, for people that aren't particularly, like, knowledgeable about basketball, is like, one of the big appeals, anyway.

Griffin: Yes. It's like, I love the slam dunk contest. Because that's like... I love a homerun derby. It's the best part of the sport, and that should just be it, I think.

Rachel: So the world record, uh, for dunking, was set by the Harlem 'Glovetrobbers' in 2000...

Griffin: You want to take another run at saying...

Rachel: [laughs] It's hard, though!

Griffin: It's hard to say the 'Harem Gobetrobbers'.

Rachel: [laughs] When you say it over and over again. Uh, okay. World record. Michael "Wild Thing" Wilson in the year 2000, set a world record by dunking on a 12 foot hoop. 12 feet.

Griffin: 12 feet. So, the other thing I also don't know much about is just sort of like, spatial relations.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Um, but I think that's pretty big, huh?

Rachel: That's pretty big, I think.

Griffin: I'm 5'10", so that's twice me, plus four inch... four inches?

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: Yeah! Twice me plus four inches. That's up there, baby.

Rachel: Yeah. That's real high.

Griffin: That's so—well, how big—how high is the hoop usually?

Rachel: I guess ten feet? Does that sound right?

Griffin: There's gotta be people dunkin' it higher than—I'm thinkin' about it, and now I'm thinking like, that's not actually that high.

Rachel: Will you look it up real quick?

Griffin: How high's the hoop? Basketball rim's ten feet.

Rachel: That's two more feet, Griff. That's pretty substantial.

Griffin: Two feet is like one of my legs. [laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Hold on. There's twice me, four inches, and one of my legs.

Rachel: Is that how you measure everything, is just—

Griffin: Hold on!

Rachel: How many Griffin legs?

Griffin: Ten feet is one me, and then, up to my shoulders. And then you add one of my legs on top of that?

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: That's a very high basketball rim!

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Uh...

Rachel: That's pretty substantial, I think.

Griffin: Was there a trampoline?

Rachel: I assume not.

Griffin: Okay...

Rachel: But you never know.

Griffin: Yep.

Rachel: So I can't talk about the Harlem Globetrotters without talking a little bit about the Washington Generals.

Griffin: These fuckin' guys.

Rachel: So I wanted to kind of talk about the history. So, in 1953, uh, they recruited a team called The Philadelphia Sphas to tour as the foils.

Griffin: Spas?

Rachel: S-P-H-A-S. Sphas?

Griffin: Sphas. Sphaaas!

Rachel: Uh, this team had actually beaten the Globetrotters before. And so, they thought they would be a good team to travel with. Um, they were rebranded as the Washington Generals. They've also taken various identities throughout time, such as the Boston Shamrocks, the New Jersey Reds, and the Atlantic City Seagulls.

If you do a little searching on the Washington Generals, they're... on the Generals website, they list three times that they have beaten the Harlem Globetrotters. The Globetrotters will only acknowledge one time, which was January 5th, 1971. They were playing without one of their star players, and part of the thing with the Globetrotters is that, when they are doing stunts, the other team, the Generals, is not allowed to like, y'know, maneuver.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: So if they're doing like, their little tricks or whatever, the team just kind of has to like, let them do their tricks.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: But when they're like, y'know, rushin' the hoop, they can like, get in there and block and do their regular thing.

Griffin: Interesting.

Rachel: So they were without their star player, Curly Neal. And so, they kind of toned down the joke aspect of the game, which is usually like, 70% of the game is them doing their antics.

Griffin: Right. [laughs]

Rachel: So they played more of a straight up game, and so, the Washington Generals had basically kind of tied it up. And at the end, the 50 year old manager of the Generals, who was also a player coach like Abe Saperstein, had a last second bucket to win the game.

Griffin: Hell yeah! Boy, how confusing must—how must—

Rachel: [laughs] Apparently there were like, children in the audience crying, because it was like, so upsetting and unnerving to see this happen.

Griffin: Uh, two things real quick. Sphas is an acronym. It's S-P-H-A-S, and that's the South Philadelphia Hebrew Association.

Rachel: Oh! Okay, that makes more sense.

Griffin: The organization that, uh, initially funded the team. And also, by uh, merit of uh, just bad Googling on my part, if you do want to know, like, where to get a nice massage or kelp wrap in Philadelphia...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I can help you there, as well.

Rachel: Uh... the Globetrotters defeated the Generals 16,000 times.

Griffin: Oh my god! [laughing] Get literally dunked on!

Rachel: Uh, in 2015, Harlem Globetrotters management chose to end contractual relations with the Generals, resulting in them ceasing operations. However, just two years later, uh, the owners bought the Generals from the Klotz family and revived them as an active team.

Griffin: I remember, distinctly, a MBMBaM episode where we talked about like, getting really into these new...

Rachel: Yeah! It did seem familiar to me.

Griffin: The Beast or something like that. There was like, some new player who like, this is who we need to finally defeat the Harlem Globetrotters. And I wanted to tell them, it's probably still not gonna happen for you.

Rachel: [laughs] Um... I will also say, another remarkable thing – they do a lot of charitable work.

Griffin: Oh yeah!

Rachel: Um, in the '90s, a former Globetrotters player purchased the team and tripled revenue in three years, and quadrupled the size of the team in five years. Uh, and under that management, they uh, amounted to more than 11 million in charitable contributions.

Griffin: Well, that's so great!

Rachel: Yeah. So this is—it's a cool thing. It's done a lot of groundbreaking things. I didn't mention the fact that there are women on the team. Uh, in 1985, Olympic gold medalist, Lynette Woodard joined, becoming the first woman on a men's pro basketball team. This is 1985. The WNBA didn't start 'til 1996.

Griffin: Jesus.

Rachel: So more than ten years before.

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: So yeah, it's just—it's a cool thing, and there's a lot of history there, and it's super accessible and entertaining to all people.

Griffin: And they help Scoob and the gang beat up all the old men who pretended to be ghosts or whatever to...

Rachel: I don't know about this.

Griffin: Yeah, they—I mean, Harlem Globetrotters have been friends of the Scooby fam—the Scoobiverse for quite some time.

Rachel: So, they had a cartoon show, which I knew about. They also had a live action Saturday morning show called The Harlem Globetrotters Popcorn Machine. [laughs]

Griffin: Okay!

Rachel: This was in the '80s. I'm not familiar.

Griffin: Was it a popcorn-based cooking show? Because I am extremely, extremely into that.

Rachel: Oh, that would be so great, with all the ball tricks and the dunks and the popcorn?

Griffin: Well, you wouldn't want them to dunk the ball... in the... in the popcorn.

Rachel: No, I was picturing more of like, shooting popcorn into the hoop.

Griffin: Into each other mouths?

Rachel: Oh, that's nice, too.

Griffin: Oh. Yeah, that makes a lot more sense, I think, than throwing a popcorn kernel... up and into a basketball hoop. I think it's gonna be tough for a camera to capture that.

Rachel: To really capture that.

Griffin: That's not our job, is it? That's the director of cinematography's job, and... can I steal you away?

Rachel: Yes.

[ad break music plays]

[advertisements]

Griffin: Got a couple Jumbotrons here. This first one is for Yuon, and it's from Jancine who says, "Baby brother, we've had quite a rough 2019, but we've made it! You've shown incredible strength and have grown so much. I am so proud of you. Here's to hoping we finally got our matching tattoos by now, and it didn't hurt too much. Anyway, like mom said, love you yesterday, love you still, always have, and always will." That's very sweet.

Rachel: Oh, that's very sweet! I wonder about these matching tattoos!

Griffin: Yeah. Do you think it's like, um... two halves... or like a snake, and then when you touch them together, they turn into a real snake and jump out of the body?

Rachel: Or along those Scooby-Doo lines that we were just talking about, I'm thinking like, a Scooby-Doo Scrappy-Doo.

Griffin: That can be really good, too. Um... that's fun.

Rachel: [laughs] Can I read you the next message?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: This is for George. It is from Meredith. "George, listening to Griffin and Rachel with you every week is just wonderful. You're my favorite person and the best cat dad around. Thank you for letting me take you all over Disney World, laughing at my puntastic jokes, and being my emotional rock through the really hard times of the past year. Here's to six years of marriage. Love you, my dude."

Griffin: Yeah, I mean, laughing at a puntastic joke is, uh, is laudable, I think.

Rachel: Is it hard for you to be in a family of such talented pun people?

Griffin: Yeah. Yeah. But that's my cross to bear. And you know I like to insulate you from that, 'cause you don't know how bad it gets. Um, but it's rough out there.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I'm trying to think of a pun to like, be an example of something that they might say. But my brain is so incapable of enjoying them that it can't even make one right now.

[Maximum Fun advertisement]

Rachel: Hey, can I hear your second thing?

Griffin: Yep. My second thing, uh, is gonna be a quick one, is arcades. Arcades.

Rachel: Oh!

Griffin: I haven't been to one in a while, uh, intentionally, that wasn't like, part of a bowling alley or a movie theater or something like that.

Rachel: Well, Pinballz.

Griffin: Pinballz. Yeah, I mean, I'm thinking recently. We haven't been to Pinballz in a couple years now.

Rachel: No, yeah, not in the past... yeah.

Griffin: Uh, but like, if you're a fan of games, and you are like, into that scene, like, the arcade, growing up for me, was always such a like, super exciting place to be. And I'm not gonna go into the history of arcades, because it's short, and like, basically, arcades came around, and they got super popular, and became like, a cool hangout spot, and then, home video games became a thing, and then, arcades slowly, excruciatingly, mostly died over the course of a few decades.

Um, but I—I have so many, like, really positive arcade experiences. Am I like, dating myself the most this episode?

Rachel: Yeah, right? Instant Messe—

Griffin: Because it kind of feels like it.

Rachel: It makes you sound like you're maybe 45 years old.

Griffin: I'm not. I am 32. Um... in Huntington, we had like, two pretty big arcades we're talking about. The first was at the Huntington Mall, and it was just—it was called Tilt, and it was just a straight up arcade. Like, a big ass arcade with—

Rachel: We had one in our mall called Exhilarama.

Griffin: Ooh, that's really good!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Y'know, it had tickets and prizes and like, the whole deal, and like, a pretty good selection. A lot of like, real estate for a mall arcade.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Like, way more than you would expect.

Rachel: It's like, half the food court at our mall.

Griffin: Yeah. And it had, y'know, the usual, the prerequisite stuff. It had light gun games. Uh, DDR. It had, uh, air hockey, skee ball, all that jazz, and like, all kinds of like, great shit.

The second one was called The Pub, and this was like, a pizza place? Uh, and it had a—just like a hu—it had like, a big dining room area that had like a—it was a weird, like, '50s theme sort of vibe, with like a jukebox, and uh...

Rachel: Did they serve alcohol?

Griffin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Rachel: Wow!

Griffin: Uh, I think so. I think they had like, beer. But you could get like, huge pizzas and shit. But then they had like this *huge* arcade in the back room, with like, the same stuff. I was very focused on like, prizes at that one, 'cause y'know, they would do the... y'know, put a Gameboy Advance up on the prize shelf, and be like, "It's only 12,000 tickets!" And I never even would come close to that.

But they had like, really dope shit. They had like, kind of rarer arcade games, which I was always excited to see. Like, they had, um... there was this Sega game called *The Ocean Hunter*, where you were these under sea, like, explorers, with these like, big jets that you held onto, and you could like, uh... and it was—oh, god, it was such a shit hot game. So they had like, a great selection.

Also, it was like, really near my church. And also, Justin worked there for a summer. So me and my buddies used to like, dip on over there after church was over. Justin would put some free plays on *Ocean Hunter*, and we would just like, eat pizza and have Coke and just like, cruise on it. And it was—

Rachel: That sounds delightful!

Griffin: So amazing. Um, and I think, like, today, they kind of operate in a different space than they did when I was younger, where now, it is... the ones that are still around, which, again, there has been a great culling, are either focused on more like... uh, novelty or preservation, or else, are supported by like, really huge, like, competitive gaming scenes. There are a lot of stores—

Rachel: Oh, yeah.

Griffin: A lot of arcades for which, like, uh, the newest Street Fighter cabinet, with like, the latest updates, is like, their anchor of their entire sort of like, financial backbone, because of like... everybody comes here to play this Street Fighter game against each other, and we have tournaments, and like, all that stuff. I went to a ton of places in Chicago that were like that.

But like, growing up, it was different. Like, growing up, it was different. And like, y'know, when my dad was growing up, it was different, like, when he was doing it. For me, like, I loved video games, and I did not have, uh, the means to go out and buy any game I wanted. Any time I got a game, I either traded in a horrifying amount of other games, to like, get, y'know, the Gameboy Camera. And I like, traded in every video game I'd ever owned just to get it. Or I would like, wait for Christmas or a birthday and hope I got the game I wanted.

So like, being able to go to a place and get like, a couple bucks worth of quarters, and then use those to like, play a bunch of different games, was always so exciting to me. Uh... because I just—I just really liked playing a bunch of different stuff.

And these days, like, whenever I go to a Pinballz, which you mentioned, which is this amazing arcade here in Austin, where they do have like... don't they have like, adult nights or something like that, where they—

Rachel: Yeah, it's like, after a certain time, they like... you're supposed to shepherd all the children out.

Griffin: Yeah, and they—can you like, bring your own beer or something like that?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I forget. Yeah. Uh, yeah, it's really rad. But when I go to those places now, it is more like a nostalgia play for me. Like, I am not usually going there to play the hot new video game. I am going there to play the games that kind of like, really cherished my time with, because it was a harder sort of thing to come by for me.

And so like, when I go there, and I see like, the old, um, like the six person Capcom beat 'em up cabinets, like the Simpsons game or the X-Men game...

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Or some of those light gun games, like all the Time Crisis games, and uh, Police Trainer. Like, I've played that so much, uh, because of my time getting free plays at the pub during Justin's incredible summer. And it still broke my heart whenever he quit that job.

Rachel: Wait, what is Police Trainer?

Griffin: It's like a light gun game, but like, you shoot, uh, balls as they fly through the air, and sometimes there's like, matching puzzles, and... it's not like—Time Crisis is like a straight up, like, guys jump out from behind a rock and try and shoot you, and this one's more—

Rachel: Is the objective to become a policeman?

Griffin: Yeah, the ranks—[laughing] It's maybe a bit, like, problematic for me, a young person, to be like, "This is all police work is! Bang, I'm shooting all these different targets!"

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: But I liked, like, the puzzles and stuff like that. House of the Dead. Like, all of those, like, great... I enjoyed me a light gun game. Um, but like, that's it. I go to the arcade very rarely, now. But it's just like, seeing those games, and I play them, and they're not games I can really play at home, necessarily, or at least have the same experience playing at home. And it just like... it makes me feel, like, super nostalgic in a way that I don't get for a lot of games.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And uh, thinking about this segment really made me want to go to Pinballz and get back there. I'm not a big pinball enthusiast. Never have been. But uh, they have a lot of uh, lot of games, too.

Rachel: Yeah, that Simpsons game. I don't know what it is about that game, but everybody in our age range is just like, a little bit obsessed with that game.

Griffin: I preferred the X-Men game. Uh, I really liked playing as Nightcrawler, 'cause you could just jam on the special button, and he would dart all over the screen and just like, blow everything up. I didn't even have to be particularly good at the game to do it. But yeah.

Hey, what's your second thing?

Rachel: My second thing is inspired by you.

Griffin: Oh!

Rachel: And it is eyelashes.

Griffin: Aww. Thanks, babe. These are the hairy mustaches on either sides of your eye.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: If you think about them.

Rachel: I would say more, and research supports this... kind of like your eye whiskers.

Griffin: Oh, yeah, that's fun.

Rachel: Uh, apparently, eyelashes function kind of the same as whiskers do for a cat or a mouse. They kind of like, alert you to obstacles and dangers near your eye.

Griffin: That's not a wide margin of error.

Rachel: Like, automatically like, shut your eye if something like, brushes your eyelashes.

Griffin: Do you think that's why mine are so long, is because I need a little bit of extra time to get these big orbs covered up?

Rachel: [laughs] I don't know. I just—I think you're blessed.

Griffin: I think my eyelashes are almost constantly touching my glasses. Is that bad? It's not great.

Rachel: I mean, I don't know why it'd be bad.

Griffin: It's just annoy—how are they gonna do their fuckin' job if they are constantly being touched?

Rachel: I think part of it, too – and this is true, actually – a lot of people with lighter color hair will have lighter colored eyelashes. You got these real dark ones.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Really frame those eyes real well.

Griffin: Thanks, hun. Is this whole segment just gonna be you talkin' about how dope my facial features are?

Rachel: [laughs] No. No. Um, so... there was a study not too long ago, um, of eyelashes; specifically, of mammal eyelashes, which are obviously most... most of—

Griffin: Most eyelashes.

Rachel: I mean, there are, like, y'know, birds and stuff that have eyelashes.

Griffin: Sure. Crocodile got a eyelash. Probably.

Rachel: The ostrich.

Griffin: The ostrich has beautiful eye—are you kidding me? Some of these ostriches. With their come hither eyes.

Rachel: [laughs] There was a study of, uh, chimpanzees, pandas, porcupines, cougars, camels, over two dozen mammals, and researchers determined that most mammal eyelashes are one third the length of eyes.

Griffin: One third the length...

Rachel: So, depending on the size of your eye, your eyelashes are most likely to be one third of that length.

Griffin: I'm having a hard time.

Rachel: If you did like, the diameter of your eye.

Griffin: That's the length of my—

Rachel: Your eyelash length.

Griffin: Oh, okay!

Rachel: It would come out... one third—

Griffin: I think I was thinking about the depth of my eye. The height of my eyeball.

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: I don't like thinking about my eyeballs as balls. I like thinking of them as little plates on the front of my head.

Rachel: Yeah, of course. Of course. [laughs]

Griffin: I don't like thinking about the meat back there.

Rachel: Um, there is a suggestion that this is like, the optimum length; not just for protecting the eye, but minimizing the flow of air over the eyeball. So if you're a mammal, you got those wet eyes.

Griffin: Oh yeah. Hate 'em.

Rachel: In order to keep, um, evaporation at bay, the eyelash at that length will stop the dust from getting in, and also, keep the airflow appropriate. 'Cause the air will come up over the eyelash, and avoid coming into your eyes.

Griffin: So it's kind of like a badass spoiler for my eyeball.

Rachel: Yeah, exactly.

Griffin: I like these guys.

Rachel: Exactly. Um, so, although mammals in the tests varied from a one pound hedgehog to a thousand pound giraffe, the length of the eyelash were invariably one third the length of the eye.

Griffin: That is a fun fucking fact.

Rachel: Isn't that crazy? Yeah. Thick eyelashes, like on a giraffe or a camel, are more effective at blocking airflow. But they also limit access to light. So this suggestion, like, a camel in the desert would need a thicker eyelash, and one that's like, more protective against the sunlight.

Griffin: Ohh. Good idea, camel!

Rachel: Giraffe, kangaroos, and camels, uh, have several rows of eyelashes, actually.

Griffin: [gasps] What?!

Rachel: Camels have three sets of eyelids and two rows of eyelashes.

Griffin: I don't like that. That's like a Coneheads. No thanks. That's yucky.

Rachel: [laughs] Um, there is a suggestion though, like... if you curl your eyelashes, like, the curl of the eyelash doesn't make any impact into their effectiveness. And that if they get too long, it's actually possible that, y'know, it works against you.

Griffin: Hm. I should go get mine looked at by science.

Rachel: Get yours measured?

Griffin: I think mine are too long.

Rachel: I don't think that's true.

Griffin: I think I need to go... do you get a haircut for them?

Rachel: [laughs] No. No, so eyelashes, like hair on your head, will like, just fall out. And the length they grow to is generally appropriate.

Griffin: Mine have—none of mine have ever fallen out.

Rachel: Oh, really?

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: See, now you're just getting braggy.

Griffin: I'm like a—no, it's not a brag. It's a real, serious problem.

Rachel: You've never had a little eyelash on your cheek and made a wish?

Griffin: No. I just keep getting more and more, and longer and longer eyelashes. They hang down to my chin. I'm like a Junji Ito monster over here. It's fucking bad.

Hey, can I tell you what our—oh, sorry.

Rachel: I was just gonna say, I think they're lovely and don't change a thing.

Griffin: Thank you, babe. I love yours, too.

Rachel: Eh.

Griffin: Eh.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: [snorts] Uh, hey. Our friends at home are talking. They're all abuzz. Can I tell you what about?

Rachel: Okay. Yes, please.

Griffin: Angeline says, "I recently moved to Philadelphia." I got some great, great spa recs for you.

Rachel: [laughs] Oh, do you need a spa?

Griffin: "And I discovered that the Free Library of Philadelphia has instruments that you can rent and bring home for a few weeks like a book. They have a bunch of stringed instruments and some drums, including even a steel drum. Public libraries are already such great wonders, and I thought this service is an extra wonderful way to serve the community."

Rachel: That is amazing!

Griffin: That's fucking incre—I read this, and I was like, "I can't not talk about this on the show." That is the coolest shit ever, and the idea of instrument libraries – which, I know there are like, initiatives that do this sort of thing in bigger cities. But like, having it be as, uh, commonplace as a library, like... that is so cool.

Rachel: Yeah! Can you imagine if you're like, a little kid, like, before, y'know, your school has a band, and you like... I mean, I remember this, 'cause I was in band. You have no idea what instrument to pick, because you haven't played, like, 90% of them. This is a cool opportunity to like, get to know new instruments.

Griffin: And for somebody like me who like, listens to a bunch of bluegrass music, and then is like, "I'm gonna learn to play the mandolin!" And so, I go and get a mandolin, and then I try to play it for like a week, and I'm like, "I am never gonna be able to fucking figure this thing out." I, y'know, won't be out one mandolin.

Jenny says, "I'm on my way out of Cincinnati from the TAZ show, and I'm struck by how wonderful bridges are! There's so many between Ohio and Kentucky, and they look so beautiful and powerful. All the unique designs give a city a lot of character, too."

Rachel: I did notice some good bridges in Cincinnati!

Griffin: We got great bridges in the whole tri-state area. We got a lot of great bridges.

Rachel: Lot of good bridges.

Griffin: Lot of great—New River Gorge Bridge. Can't beat it. Lot of great suspension bridges.

Rachel: Yeah. What was that lighted one that we took...

Griffin: That was in, uh... I think in Ironton, actually, going out to Ashland, I want to say?

Rachel: Yeah, that sounds right.

Griffin: Uh, yeah. So like, in fairly unexpected places, like, gorgeous, gorgeous pieces of infrastructure. Yeah. Obviously, not only relegated to the Ohio Kentucky West Virginia tri-state area, but...

Rachel: Yeah. I am—y'know, I did see some bridges in other parts of the country.

Griffin: I have seen them. I've almost certainly... I don't think I have ever forded the Mississippi River. I'm pretty sure, every time I've crossed it, it has been on a bridge.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: So... hey, thank you to Bo En and Augustus for the use of our theme song, Money Won't Pay. You can find a link to that in the episode description. And uh, thank you to the Maximum Fun network.

Rachel: Yeah! If you are interested in finding new podcasts, I encourage you to go to MaximumFun.org. There are new episodes of shows posted every day, and they are always very funny and fun and informative.

Griffin: If you really enjoy the stuff that uh, that we make, and that the network, uh, at large sort of champions... well, good news – the MaxFunDrive is just around the corner! It is your chance to support us and support, uh, this amazing community by becoming a monthly member here.

And we're gonna have lots of details for how you can do that, and all the really cool stuff that you can earn for becoming a Max Fun supporter, including all the bonus content, including, like we've talked about before, the episode where Rachel played Animal Crossing for a month and then talked about it. That is uh, a very near and dear episode to my heart.

Got lots of other stuff, too, from all of our past bonus endeavors that you're gonna find something that you're just gonna love. I guarantee it.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: That kicks off here in a couple weeks, and so, we're gonna have more details for you then. But y'know, keep your ear to the ground.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Hey, what should we go out on?

Rachel: Y'know what, I had a lot of people on Twitter and Facebook, uh, expressing their enthusiasm for us ending last show saying that we were proud of them.

Griffin: Oh, okay.

Rachel: I like the little, like, affirmation at the end, y'know? So is there another way we could potentially compliment our listeners and make them feel good about themselves?

Griffin: I feel like that's gonna get exhausting, to think of new ways to do that every week. So I would push that we try to come up with a sort of boiler plate... but it's gotta be powerful.

Rachel: Yeah, right? I want it to be powerful.

Griffin: Um... 'proud of you' is like... it covers everything. But it also, like—I feel like there's gonna be people who know, like, I did *not* do... I really boned it this week.

Rachel: Yeah. You said you were proud of me last week, and okay, I deserved it.

Griffin: Yeah. But I boned it this week, so it feels like you're almost making fun of me a little bit? So like, maybe we do a sort of Nerds box double

package of just like, hey, we're proud of you... and... the sun will come out tomorrow. Or like, y'know, something like that. Like, better luck next ti—

Rachel: [laughing] I love the Nerds box double package. That's a good suggestion.

Griffin: Yeah. I like those. I can't eat Nerds anymore, I don't think. That's just straight ass sugar, man. That would ruin me.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Okay, anyway, we're getting distracted thinking about candy. Again. Don't change a thing. Unless you're trying to change. Ah, shit!

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: [sighs] We need to bust out like, how to make friends and influence people.

Rachel: Yeah, you're right. Uh, what about, um... congratulations on washing your hands an appropriate length of time today?

Griffin: That's gotta—it's so important. You gotta sing Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star, or whatever.

Rachel: Happy Birthday.

Griffin: Happy Birthday? Is that what they did?

Rachel: Good work.

Griffin: Sometimes I'll do all of, um... I'll do all of Stay from Lisa Loeb.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: So it takes me a long time, but these hands get really clean. We'll come back to it.

Rachel: [laughs]

[theme music plays]

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